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Letter dated 2 October 2000 from the Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People addressed to the Secretary-General

In my capacity as Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, I should like to draw your attention, as a matter of urgency, to the violent confrontations between the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) and police and Palestinian worshippers at Al-Aqsa Mosque and throughout the Haram al-Sharif compound that erupted on 28 September 2000. Violent confrontations also took place all across the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. According to media reports, 40 Palestinians died in the clashes. Altogether, some 1,500 people were reported injured. Reports indicate that most of the dead and injured sustained wounds caused by rubber-coated metal bullets and live ammunition. Moreover, excessive force was used by IDF against the Palestinian protesters, including tanks, helicopter gunships, anti-tank missiles and grenades.

On behalf of the Committee on the Exercise of the Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People, I would like to express the gravest and growing concern at the continued confrontations in the Old City of Jerusalem and throughout the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The Committee is dismayed by the loss of life as a result of these confrontations. It is particularly saddened by the tragic deaths of innocent Palestinian children.

The Committee is of the view that the events of the past several days are a direct result of the policies and practices of the Israeli occupation. To this day, Israel has continued to violate its obligations under the Geneva Convention relative to the Protection of Civilian Persons in Time of War, of 12 August 1949 (the Fourth Geneva Convention), and the provisions of dozens of Security Council and General Assembly resolutions. Our Committee has warned on a number of occasions that Israel's failure to live up to those principles, as well as the continued lack of progress in the Israeli-Palestinian peace negotiations, would allow despair and frustration to set in, putting the peace process in considerable jeopardy and leading to increased volatility on the ground.

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The Committee therefore addresses an urgent appeal to you, as well as to all the parties concerned, to take the necessary steps in order to induce Israel to abide by its obligations and responsibilities under the Fourth Geneva Convention, to guarantee its respect for the Holy Places and to ensure international protection of the Palestinian people.

In the light of the above, the Committee reiterates its long-standing position that the United Nations should continue to exercise its permanent responsibility towards all the aspects of the question of Palestine, including the issue of Jerusalem, until it is resolved in a satisfactory manner, in conformity with relevant United Nations resolutions and in accordance with international legitimacy, and until the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people are fully realized.

I should be grateful if you would have this letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 41, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Ibra Deguène **Ka**
Chairman of the Committee on the Exercise of the
Inalienable Rights of the Palestinian People